

HANGING

of

the

CRANE

A DRAMATIC PRESENTATION of Longfellow's Poem THE HANGING OF THE CRANE

by

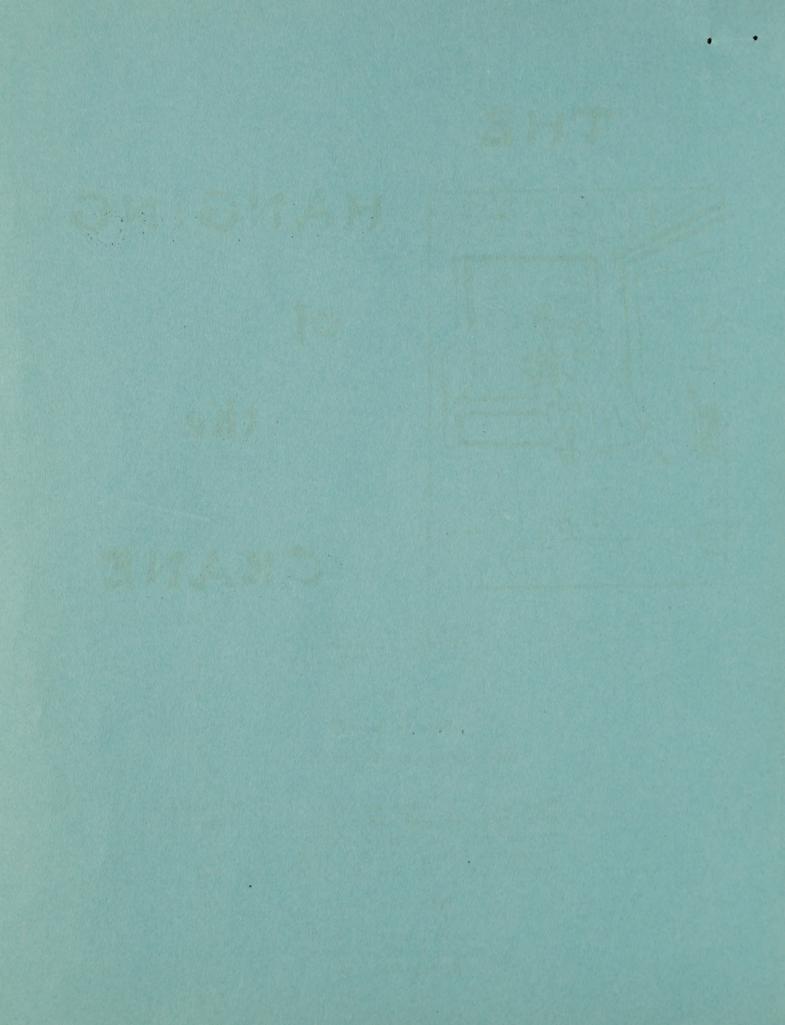
Mrs. E. G. Hoff

Director of Mothers and Daughters

"The lights are out, and gone are all the guests
That thronging came with merriment and jests
To celebrate the Hanging of the Crano
In the new house, into the night are gone;
But still the fire upon the hearth burns on."

Price Five Cents

General Mission Board Church of the Brethren Elgin, Illinois



A Dramatic Presentation of Longfellow's poem, "The Hanging of the Crane"

Setting: Large room, kitchen and dining room combined. Colonial furnishings and costumes may be used throughout, or modern if preferred. A fireplace with a crane is necessary with kettle on it, also a small round dining table. Use your own initiative to supply other properties, as lamps, cupboards, pictures, chairs.

Plan: A series of six tableaux present, pictorially, the growth of the family from the wedding day until the golden wedding anniversary. A reader carries forth the attion. She may sit in a cozy arm chair at one side of stage socing the action as in a vision. If so her words should be memorized. Or she may be behind the scenes. (Some one shouldintroduce the program with the incident related below in the introduction.) A soloist accompanied by pianist sings between the tableaux. Substitute selections may be made.

Music Sources: Treasure Chest song books may be found in Woolworth's and Kresges

Ton Cont Stores at 10% a piece.

Treasure Chest Community Songster contains - Londonderry Air, Brahms Cradle Song, and Silver Threads Among the Gold.

Bless This House - Mae H. Brahe, Bossey & Co., 113 W. 57 St., N. Y.

The plan for the whole presentation follows briefly:

I. Reverie -- The fact of the new household and The Hanging of the Crane.

II. Tableau 1 Table set for two, bride and groom,

III. Tableau 2 Table set for three, father, mother, and baby son, Musc.

IV. Tableau 3 Extended table with added leaves set for four, father, mother, boy of four or five years, and baby sister 2 or 3 years.

V. Tableau 4 Table set for six, father, mother, sons, 21 and 16, daughters,

19 and 13.

VI. Tableau 5 The table dwindles to round again for two, past middle aged mother and father--the fledglings have flown.

VII. Tableau 6 The golden wedding anniversary. At least four couples and any number of grand children.

Characters: 5 mon, 5 women, 4 young people, any number of children, reader, soloist, and pianist.

Time: About thirty minutes.

Introduction: The Hanging of the Crane in the great throat of the chimney in the fireplace of the colonial home was, in a measure, the dedication of the home. One such fireplace bears an inscription which reads: "In recognition of the blossings of Almighty God, this home isdedicated to faith, hope and love." The hanging of the crane was accompanied with merry making and foasting. Longfellow felt with deep emotion the beauty and significance of such a celebration. In this poem he helps us to appreciate it. The poem was inspired by a visit one morning to a home which was newly established. The head of the household, Mr. Aldrich, tells it so beautifully, "One morning Mr. Longfellow came to the little house where we had set up housekeeping in the light of our honeymoon. As we lingered a moment in the dining room door, Mr. Longfellow turning to me said, 'Ah, 'Mr. Aldrich, your small round table will not always be closed. By and by you will find new faces clustering about it; as years go in, leaf after leaf will be added until the time comes when the young guests will take flight, one by one, to build nests of their own elsewhere. Gradually the long table will shrink to a circle again, leaving two old people sitting there alone. This is the story of life, the sweet and pathetic poom of the fireside. Make an idyl of it. I give the idea to you." But it remained for Mr. Longfellow to develop the motif which he has done with sympathetic handling. (Story from Cambridge edition of Longfellow's Complete works.

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Curtains are drawn back.

Soloist sings one verse of Home Sweet Home.

Stage: Main setting without table. Crane and kettle plainly visible.

Reader:

The lights are out, and gone are all the guests That thronging came with merriment and jests To celebrate the Hanging of the Crane In the new house, into the night are gone; But still the fire upon the hearth burns on, And I alone remain.

O fortunate, O happy day, When a new household finds its place Amid the myriad homes of earth, Like a new star just sprung to birth, And rolled on its harmonious way, Into the boundless realms of space!

So said the guests in speech and song, As in the chimney burning bright, We hung the iron crane tonight, And merry was the feast and long.

Curtain

Soloist sings, "I Love You Truly," while stage is set for II.

II

A bride and groom sit eating at a small round table. Suit the action to the words. Reader:

And now I sit and muse on what may be, And in my vision see, or seem to see, Through floating vapors interfused with light, Shapes indeterminate, that gleam and fade, As shadows passing into deeper shade Sink and clude the sight.

For two alone, there in the hall, Is spread the table round and small; Upon the polished silver shine The evening lamps, but, more divine, The light of love shines over all; Of love, that says not mine and thine, But ours, for ours is thine and mine.

They want no guests to come between Their tender glances like a screen, And tell them tales of land and sea And whatsoever may betide The great forgotten world outside; They want no guests, they need must be Each others own best company.

Curtain

Soloist sings choice of "Bless This House," "I Love a Little Cottage" or "Smilin' Thru" while stage is set for III.

news out to animal out to seal off all Soluter execute the western of Hemm Sweet Tomes and Leather Claims. to the Aliance are out, and grow over all the growing the carly as a market Monamore mis a realist oburta, tugoso come successing emobiuta no . COURT MARKET TO MAKE AND AND THE PARTY OF

The table is set for three, father, mother, baby son in high chair plays with a spoon and drops it. At the time indicated a nurse comes for baby, or the mother may be

Reader:

The picture fades; as at a village fair A showmen's views, dissolving into air, Again appear transfigured on the screen, So in my fancy this; and now once more, In part disfigured, through the open door Appear the self same scene. Scated I see the two again, But not alone; they entertain A little angel unaware, With face as round as is the moon, A royal guest with flaxen hair, Who, throned upon his lofty chair, Drums on the table with his spoon Then drops it careless on the floor, To grasp at things unseen before. Are these celestial manners? These The ways that win, the arts that please? Ah, yes; consider well the guest, And whatsoe'er he does seems best; He ruleth by the right divine Of helplessness, so lately born In purple chambers of the morn; As soverign over thee and thine. He speakoth not; and yet there lies A conversation in his eyes; The golden silonce of the grook, The gravest wisdom of the wise, Not spoken in language, but in looks More legible than in printed books, As if he could but would not speak. And now, O monarch absolute Thy power is put to proof; for, lo! Rosistless, fathomless and slow, The nurse comes rustling like the sea, And pushes back thy chair and thee, And so good night to King Canute.

Curtain

Soloist sings "Cradle Song," by Brahms or "All Through The Night" while scene is set for IV.

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Table is set for four, father, mother, boy four or five years, baby sister, two or three years in high chair. The children eat from blue bowls.

Reader:

As one who walking in a forest sees
A lovely landscape through the parted trees
Then sees it not, for boughs that interveno;
Or as we see the moon some times revealed
Through drifting clouds, and then again concealed,
So I behold the scene.

There are two guests at table now: The king, deposed and older grown. No longer occupies the throne :-The crown is on his sister's brow; A princess from the Fairy Isles. The very pattern girl of girls. All covored and embroidered in curls; Rose-tinted from the Isle of Flowers, And sailing with soft silken sails From far off dreamland into ours. Above their bowls with rims of blue Four azure eyes of deeper hue Are lookin dreamy, with delight: Limpid as planets that emerge Above the ocean's rounded verge. Soft shining through the summer night Steadfast they gaze, yet nothing see Beyond the horizon of their bowls; Nor care they for the world that rolls With all its freight of troubled souls Into the days that are to be.

Curtain

Soloist sings, "School Days" or "That Little Boy of Mine" while stage is set for V.

T

Table is enlarged to seat at least six--father, mother, four young folks, sons, 21 and 16, daughters, 19 and 13.

Reader:

Again the tossing boughs shut out the scene. Again the drifting vapors intervenc. And the moon's palled disk is hidden quite; And now I see the table wider grown As round a pobble into water thrown Dilatos a ring of light. I soe the table wider grown, I see it garlanded with guests, As if fair Ariadne's crown Out of the sky had fallen down: Maidens within whose tender breasts A thousand rostless hopes and fears, Forth reaching to the coming years, Flutter awhile, then quiet lie, Like timid birds that fain would fly, But do not dare to leave their nests;-And youths, who in their strength elate

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Challenge the van and front of fate,
Eager as champions to be
In the divine king--erranty
Of youth, that travels sea and land
Seeking adventures, or pursues,
Through cities, and through solitudes,
Frequented by the lyric muse,
The phantom with the beckening hand,
That still allures and still cludes,
O sweet clusion of the brain;
O sudden thrilled of fire and frost;
The world is bright while ye remain
And dark and dead when ye are lost;

Curtain

Soloist sings choice of (1)"Londonderry Air" "Would God I Were a Tender Apple Blossom" or (2) "A Brown Bird Singing," while stage is set for VI.

VI

Table back to its original size, father and mother only. Their hair is grayed. Mother leaves the table to scan the paper. She wipes the tears.

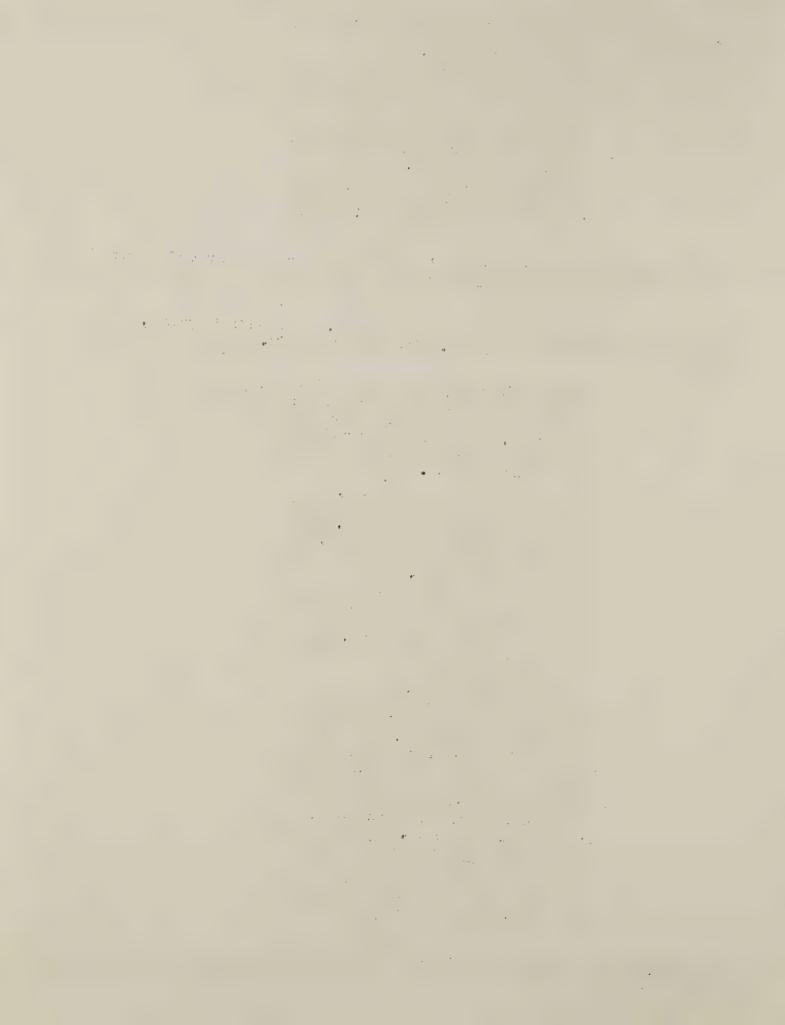
Reader:

The meadow brook, that seemeth to stend still, Quickens its current as it nears the mill; And so the stream of time that lingereth In level places, and so dull appears, Runs with a swifter current as it nears The gloomy mills of death.

And now, like the magician's scroll. That in the owner's keeping shrinks With every wish he speaks or thinks. Till the last wish consumes the whole. The table dwindles, and again I see the two alone remain. The crown of stars is broken in parts: Its jewels, brighter than the day, Have one by onebeen stolen away To shine in other homes and hearts. One is a wanderer now afar In Ceylon or in Zanzebar Or sunny regions of Cathay: And one is in the boistrous camp Mid clink of arms and horses' tramp And battle's terrible array. I see the patient mother read With aching heart, of wrecks that float Disabled on those seas remote Or of some great heroic deed On battlefields, where thousands bleed To lift one hero into fame. Anxious she bows hor graceful head Above those chronicles of pain, And trembles with a secret dread Lost there among the drowned or slain She find the sac beloved name.

Curtain

Soloist sings, "The Old Spinning Wheel" or "Silver Threads Among the Gold" while stage is set for VII.



The table is removed to make room for the guests on the golden wedding anniversary. A golden bell may be suspended above the mantle. Parents are agod, at least four couples, (may be same as in V older grown, and their companions) and a choice of the number and ages of grand children. Choose your own action: Congratulations, presenting a gift, etc. Children may go in and out. After reader is finished the aged father raises his hand in benediction on the entire family group. They bow their heads for a moment of silence.

Reader:

After a day of cloud and wind and rain
Sometimes the setting sun breaks out again
And touching all the darksome woods with light,
Smilos on the fields, until they laugh and sing,
Then like a ruby from the horizon's ring
Drops down into the night.

What see I now? The night is fair, The storm of griof, the clouds of care, The wind, the rain, have passed away; The lamps are lit, the fires burn bright, The house is full of life and light; It is the golden wodding day. The guests come thronging in once more Quick footsteps sound along the floor; The trooping children crowd the stair, And in and out and every where Flashes along the corridor The sunshine of their golden hair. On the round table in the hall Anothor Ariadne's crown Out of the sky hath fallen down, More than one Monarch of the moon Is drumming with his silver spoon; The light of love shines over all.

O fortunate, O happy day!
The people sing, the people say,
The ancient bridegroom and the bride,
Smiling contented and serone
Upon the blithe bewildering scene,
Behold, well pleased, on every side
Their forms and features multiplied,
As the reflection of a light.
Between two burnished mirrors gleam,
Or lamps upon a bridge at night
Stretch on and on before the sight,
Till the long vista endless seems.

Silent benediction by aged father-

Curtain Soloist sings one verse of "There is Beauty All Around" (Hymnal)

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